

שבועות

A FESTIVAL GUIDE FOR SHAVUOT, 5773



The Lord inscribed on the tablets the same text as on the first,
the Ten Commandments that He addressed to you on the mountain out of the fire
on the day of Assembly...(Deuteronomy 10:4)

זמן מתן תורתנו -- Zeman Matan Torateinu
THE TIME WHEN THE TORAH IS GIVEN TO
THE JEWISH PEOPLE

by Rabbi Perry Raphael Rank

Shavu'ot Begins: Tuesday, May 14, 2013; Candle Lighting: 7:45 PM
Shavu'ot Ends: Thursday, May 16, 2012; Havdalah: 8:48 PM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
YOM TOV—WHAT IS IT?	4
THE CANDLE LIGHTING SCHEDULE AND BLESSINGS	5
SOME SHAVU'OT TERMINOLOGY AND TRADITIONS	7
SHAVU'OT CUSTOMS	8
TIKKUN LEL SHAVU'OT	10
JEOPARDY	12
DECORATING THE BIMAH WITH FLOWERS	13
THE CALENDAR	14
ONE GREAT, SHAVUOT FOCACCIA WITH PEPPERS RECIPE	15

Sweetness drops from your
Lips, O bride [read: O Torah];
Honey and milk are under
Your tongue...
(Song of songs 4:11)



INTRODUCTION

The festival of Shavu'ot commemorates ***zeman matan Torateinu***—the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. For the Jew who believes in morality and ethics, there can be no festival more important than Shavu'ot. It is the day on which we commemorate an event in which the will of God and the will of the Jewish people became one and the same. It is a day on which we commemorate an event at Sinai that changed the national character of the Jewish people forever. And it is day on which we commemorate the promotion of sacred values, without which the world would be void of ***kedushah*** or sanctity.

Shavu'ot is special because it demands that we live not only by reason, but by faith as well. If, after the twentieth century, Jews still believe that reason alone is the vehicle to moral life, they have not absorbed the bitter lessons of modern history. It was the 20th century that proved to all just how amoral reason is. Like the tornado which cannot distinguish between an



abandoned building and a school filled with children, reason does not naturally lead us to any moral high ground. It is a slave to people, and immoral people will rationalize their every act. Shavu'ot comes to teach us that our reason is as sound as the moral values that guide it.

And what is it that the Jewish people value? We value the sanctity of human life, the importance of compassion and love, the

need to cultivate the mind, the necessity of creating sacred time via ***shabbatot*** (Sabbaths) and ***hagim*** (festivals), the One power greater than ourselves who both cares and protects us, and above all we value ***emet***— the truth. There are those who readily recognize this unique gift which the Jewish people has given to the world, and there are those who deeply resent us for our convictions. Nevertheless, it is the Jewish mission to live by these values and to promote these values. Unless we demand of ourselves the highest moral standard, we cannot seriously call ourselves Jews.

On Shavu'ot, we chant that portion of the Torah which recalls the giving of ***Aseret Hadibrot***, the Ten Commandments, on Mt. Sinai. In order to hear the Ten Commandments chanted in the synagogue on Shavu'ot, we must take time off from our hectic schedules. That's no easy sacrifice to make and it often entails a lot of explanation to people who are otherwise unfamiliar with Jewish sacred time and holidays. And yet, the time invested in synagogue is a worthy investment. Jews of the twenty-first century must take steps to assure a Jewish future

that is both vibrant and vital. The tradition that we permit to encroach on our mundane work week is a powerful tradition, and its future will definitely be both vibrant and vital.

Shavu'ot is a good reason for celebration together with our sacred synagogue family. Make it a part of your Jewish identity. Make it a part of your Jewish family life.

YOM TOV—WHAT IS IT?

We all know the expression, “Have a good day.” “Good day” is literally what Yom Tov means—and more. Yom Tov technically refers to the three major festivals in our Tradition: Pesah, Shavu'ot, and Sukkot. “Yontif” (the Yiddish pronunciation) is interchangeable with Yom Tov, but we use the latter in accordance with modern Hebrew conventions.

In Conservative Judaism, Yom Tov is a joyous, yet serious business. It is serious because it is a day when no business is permitted. Like Shabbat, it is a day when we close our stores, refrain from writing, postpone arts and crafts projects, leave the laundry alone, and concentrate on being together with family, friends, and community.

Conservative Jews observe Yom Tov. It is part of our identity as Jews and part of the way we relate to God. Since you might want to incorporate a bit of Yom Tov into your home, here are a few pointers on how to get started.

1. Cover your Yom Tov table with a white table cloth and take out your best china and silverware.
2. Make sure to come to synagogue for the evening and morning services.
3. Invite guests to your home for Yom Tov and make a commitment to speak of Torah, ethical challenges in the world, the values of Jewish tradition, etc.
4. Work is prohibited. Don't wash the floors, cut or water the grass, do the laundry, etc. Rather, take walks, talk to friends, start a good book, study a passage from the Bible.
5. Finally, and this is ambitious—plan on taking off from work or school during Yom Tov, if not both days, at least the first day. After all, Yom Tov is a vacation that you deserve.



The Jewish people “keep kosher,” the dietary customs that establish a connection between us and God. Since on Shavuot, we recreate the giving of the Torah at Sinai, and the Israelites would not yet have known the precise traditions regarding the dietary customs, a tradition evolved to “play it safe” and it only dairy foods, at least for one’s first meal of the Yom Tov.

THE CANDLE LIGHTING SCHEDULE & BLESSINGS

Part of the way we make Yom Tov special, a day separate and apart from other days of the week, is by ushering it in with light. We light at least two candles, of the Shabbat variety, or one for each member of the family. Anyone can say the candle blessings, though the honor is generally given to the woman of the household.



This is how to welcome in Yom Tov with light and happiness:

1. Light the candles;
2. With both hands, circle the candles three times, as if welcoming someone;
3. Cover your eyes so you cannot see the candle light;
4. Say the appropriate blessings as listed below;
5. Add a few personal prayers for yourself or for your family to God;
6. Uncover your eyes, say **Hag Same'ah** (Happy Holiday) and give everyone a Yom Tov kiss;

The Blessings Schedule

<u>DAY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>BLESSINGS</u>
Tuesday	May 14	7:45 PM	1, 2
Wednesday	May 15	8:46 PM*	1, 2

* The flame used to light candles on the second night must be obtained from an existing fire, like a pilot light or a candle lit before Yom Tov for this express purpose. This is because on Yom Tov, we may transfer fire, but we can neither create it nor extinguish it.

BLESSING # 1

ברוך אתה יי, אלקינו מלך העולם,

אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של יום טוב.

*Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melek ha'olam,
asher kidishanu bemitzvotav, vitzivanu lehadlik ner shel Yom Tov.*

Praised are You, Adonai our God, who rules the universe,
who makes us holy through mitzvot
and has commanded us to bring light to this good day.

BLESSING # 2

ברוך אתה יי, אלקינו מלך העולם,

שהחיינו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

*Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melek ha'olam,
shehehyanu, vekiyimanu, vehigi'anu, lazeman hazeh.*

Praised are You, Adonai our God, who rules the universe, who has given us life, and given us sustenance, and has brought us to this special time.

BLESSING # 3

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת וְשֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.

*Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha'olam,
asher kidishanu bemitzvotav, vitzivanu lehadlik ner
shel Shabbat vishel Yom Tov.*

Praised are You, Adonai our God, who rules the universe,
who makes us holy through mitzvot
and has commanded us to bring light to this Shabbat and to this good day.

SOME SHAVU'OT TERMINOLOGY AND TRADITIONS

AKDAMUT	A beautiful hymn composed by Meir ben Isaac Nehorai of Orleans (11 th century), read before the Torah reading on the first day of Shavuot, and which describes the faithfulness of the Jewish people to God.
ASERET HADIBROT	The Ten Commandments.
<u>HAG</u> HAKATZIR	The Festival of Harvest, which is another name for the festival of Shavu'ot. It is an appropriate name for Shavu'ot coincided with the time for harvesting in the fields.
REVELATION	The theological process by which the <i>Aseret Hadibrot</i> were given at Mount Sinai.
SEFIRAT HA'OMER	The Counting of the Omer—is a sacred ritual in which we count, with a special blessing, every day between the second day of Pesah and 49 days thereafter. The fiftieth day is Shavu'ot.
SHAVU'OT	The holiday commemorating the giving of the <i>Aseret Hadibrot</i> at Mount Sinai.

TARYAG MITZVOT

The 613 commandments in the Torah.

YOM HABIKKURIM

The Day of First Fruits, which is another name for Shavu'ot. It is an appropriate name for on Shavu'ot, the first of the crops were brought to the ancient Temple in Jerusalem as an offering of thanks to God. And these offerings were made on a regular basis right up until the time of Sukkot (Bikkurim1:6).

SHAVU'OT CUSTOMS מנהגי שבועות

TIKKUN LEL SHAVU'OT—On Shavu'ot, the Kabbalists would study all night long and begin services with the dawn. They believed that this all night study would prepare or “repair” (*tikkun* means “repair” in Hebrew) their souls for the hearing of the Ten Commandments read from the Torah. We will begin our mini-Tikkun on Tuesday, May 14, around 9:30 PM. We will conclude this Tikkun by 12:15 AM (Sunday morning).

DAIRY FOODS—As our ancestors prepared themselves for receiving the Torah, they made certain sacrifices which heightened their awareness of the great act of Revelation. One such sacrifice was abstention from meat, at least for part of the festival. Vegetarianism on Shavu'ot underscores our belief that a life of Torah is one which brings peace, not only between humanity and itself, but between humanity and nature. Hence, the connection between Shavu'ot and cheese cake. Yum.



READING THE BOOK OF RUTH

—The story of Ruth occurs during the festival of Shavu'ot. Tradition thus regarded the study of Ruth as most appropriate for the holiday. But perhaps there is a deeper meaning. Ruth was a convert to Judaism. Lest anyone

argue that the Torah was given to Jews alone, let them read the book of Ruth. This story will maintain that Torah was given to all who choose to accept it. God's word is accessible to all.



DECORATING THE SYNAGOGUE WITH FLOWERS—In some synagogues, the floors were covered with grass. This custom reminds us of the holiday's early agricultural origins. It might also be one more symbol of the peace between humanity and nature which we try to effect at this time. The Midway Munchkins are welcomed to decorate the bimah (pulpit) with flowers on the first day of Shavu'ot, Wednesday, May 15, during Shaḥarit (the morning service), with flower decoration to begin around 10:00 AM.

Rabbi Aha said: One who has learned Torah, taught it, kept and fulfilled it, but who having the opportunity to encourage and assist others did not do so, is cursed. Rabbi Jeremiah said: One who has neither learned Torah, kept nor fulfilled it, but who having had an opportunity to encourage and assist others to do so, did so, is blessed.
(Talmud Yerushalmi, Sotah)



TIKKUN LEL SHAVU'OT תיקון ליל שבועות

TUESDAY, MAY 14, 9:30 PM

Rabbi Rank will speak on: THE ORAL TORAH—
Changing Attitudes About Pick & Choose Jews

Rabbi Hearshen will speak on: DREAMING OF THE FUTURE—
The Talmudic and Midrashic Material on Dreams

Come study Torah with your Midway family on Tuesday, May 14, and participate in a kabbalistic tradition that is 500 years old.



Study prepares the heart and mind to receive the words of Torah fully, so what better way to prepare for Wednesday morning's re-enactment of the Giving of Torah than to engage in this centuries-old tradition. It's going to be an evening of food for the mind (Torah) and body (cheese cake—oh yea!) so don't hesitate to come out.

We'll be done by 11:45 PM.

Both Rabbi Rank and Rabbi Hearshen will be teaching.

**Keep your neshamah (soul) in shape...
Study builds soul muscles!**

A SHAVUOT BARBECUE?



This year—yes!

We are going to gather together
on Wednesday, May 15—

6:00 PM Minhah

6:15 PM Barbecue

7:15 PM Jeopardy

8:00 PM (or after Jeopardy) Ma'ariv

We've got hot dogs, hamburgers, chips and soda. We'll have veggie options too. But you need to RSVP and your check is your reservation—

\$10.00 per adult

\$8.00 per teen (18 years or younger)

Please contact the synagogue office for more info and reservations
516 938-8390 or carolto@mjc.org



JEOPARDY COMES TO MIDWAY JEWISH CENTER

(sans Alex Trebek)

**YOUR HOST WITH THE MOST:
DANE SIDI**

Wednesday, May 15, Following the Barbecue (approx. 7:15 pm)

Test your Jewish trivia knowledge against
the formidable contestants of Midway Jewish Center

Answer: Cheese Blintzes

Question: What will not be served during the Midway Jewish Center Shavuot Barbecue

CORRECT FOR TWO KNISHES (pareve)

THE DAY THE TORAH WAS GIVEN, MT. SINAI WAS GREEN AND LEAFY
AND FULL OF LIFE...

IN HONOR OF SHAVU'OT,
WE FILL OUR BIMAH WITH BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS



FILL THE BIMAH WITH BEAUTY!
AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, DON'T MISS—

ASERET HADIBROT
THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Midway Jewish Center
Wednesday, May 15, 10:00 AM

YOUR USER-FRIENDLY GUIDE TO THE MATAN TORAH FESTIVAL OF SHAVU'OT — שבועות

All candle lighting times recorded follow the tradition of lighting candles 18 (which in Hebrew is *hai*, a word which also means “life”) minutes prior to sunset. This is the latest candles may be lit. Candles may always be lit earlier. When going to services, light the candles first in a safe spot and then come to synagogue.

<u>DAY</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
T	14	7:45 PM	Candle Lighting (from an existing flame)
		7:50 PM	<i>Minhah</i> (The Afternoon Service)
		8:05 PM	<i>Ma'ariv</i> (The Evening Service)
		8:30 PM	KIDDUSH AND CHEESE —Every festival begins with Kiddush, but on Shavuot, we have an opportunity to do a wine and cheese party—but let's call it Kiddush and Cheese. Because Shavuot is very much a dairy holiday, we're turning this evening into a Kiddush and Cheese evening. Come join us for Kiddush (it's more than just wine) and Cheese.
		9:30 PM	TIKKUN LEL SHAVU'OT —This ceremony, of Kabbalistic (Jewish mystical) derivation, involves an evening of study prior to the first day of Shavu'ot. Because study in Jewish tradition is regarded as sacred, an evening of concentrated study was meant to prepare the soul spiritually for what would be a re-enactment of God's giving the ASERET HADIBROT (The Ten Commandments) to the Jewish people the following morning. The <i>Tikkun Lel Shavu'ot</i> will conclude by 11:45 PM and include not only great study, but great noshing, as well.
W	15	9:00 AM	<i>Shaharit</i> & <i>Musaf</i> —Morning & Additional Services
		10:00 AM	The Midway Munchkins are invited to decorate our <i>bimah</i> (pulpit) with flowers in honor of Shavu'ot
		NOON	A Great Kiddush
		6:00 PM	<i>Minhah</i> (Afternoon Service)
		6:15 PM	Shavu'ot Barbecue
		7:15 PM	Dane Sidi's Annual Jeopardy (Jewpardy?) Contest
		8:00 PM	<i>Ma'ariv</i> (Evening Service)
		8:46 PM	Candle Lighting (from an existing flame)
TH	16	9:00 AM	<i>Shaharit</i> —Morning Service
		11:30 AM	Yizkor—Memorial Service for Our Loved Ones
		8:05 PM	<i>Minhah</i> , <i>Ma'ariv</i> (Afternoon, Evening Services) & Havdalah

ONE, GREAT, SHAVUOT FOCACCIA WITH PEPPERS RECIPE

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Dough needs to rise: 1.5 hours

Total Time: 2 hours, 30 minutes

Yield: 6-8 servings

The Cook: Giora Shimoni

Ingredients:

- Dough:
- 4 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbsp. yeast, active dry
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 4 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 1/2 cups water, room temperature
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt
- Topping:
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 purple onion, chopped
- 5-6 medium bell peppers (2 red, 2 yellow, 2 orange), cut into 1/2 inch strips
- 8-12 cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 3/4 cup Bulgarian cheese, crumbled
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese
- salt, fresh thyme, fresh basil, according to taste

Preparation:

1. Slowly mix the flour, yeast and sugar in a mixing bowl. Slowly add the water and oil. After the dough starts to form, add the salt. Mix for about 3 minutes, until the dough pulls away from the sides of the bowl and forms a soft, flexible dough. Cover the bowl of dough with plastic wrap. Place the bowl of dough in a warm area for about 45 minutes so the dough will rise.
2. Cover cookie sheets with parchment paper. Spray with non-stick cooking spray.
3. Knead the dough for 2-3 minutes to remove air bubbles. Separate into 2 parts. Use a rolling pin to flatten into 2 large rectangles. Place on cookie sheets. Cover with towels. Set aside for 30 minutes so the dough will rise.
4. In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the purple onion and sauté until just softened. Add the peppers, and continue to sauté until just softened. Remove from heat and allow to cool (you don't want to put hot vegetables on the dough).
5. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Spread the cooled vegetables on the dough. Scatter the tomatoes, cheeses and spices on top, according to taste.
6. Bake for 30 minutes or until the dough is golden on the bottom.